



## TIPS FOR REPORTING OTHER PROBLEMS AND INCIDENTS

SDPD Neighborhood Policing Resource Team

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The SDPD is not responsible for dealing with all of the problems and incidents that affect public health, safety, and welfare, although in many cases it works with other agencies in addressing them. Problems involving graffiti, litter, animals, unsafe street conditions, certain municipal code violations, neighborhood nuisances, abandoned shopping carts, suspected child and elder abuse, and lost persons with Alzheimer's disease should be reported to the agencies that have the primary responsibility. All of these reports are completely confidential so you should not be afraid to give your name, address, and phone number.

Phone numbers for reporting various problems and incidents are provided in this paper. Another way to report them is with **San Diego 311** on your Smartphone. You can take pictures and report potholes, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, illegal dumping, broken sidewalks, overgrown trees, broken streetlights, etc. Pictures are geo-tagged to automatically provide the problem location. Free download information is available for the following:

- **iPhone:** Go to iTunes App store and search for San Diego 311 or visit <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/san.diego.311/id435003098?mt=8&ls=1>
- **Android:** go to the Android marketplace and search for San Diego 311 or visit <http://market.android.com/details?id=com.citysourced.sandiegoca>
- **Blackberry:** For touch screen device visit link from your blackberry visit [http://dl.citysourced.com/m/sandiegoca/t/sandiegoca\\_1\\_3\\_8.jad](http://dl.citysourced.com/m/sandiegoca/t/sandiegoca_1_3_8.jad). For non-touch screen device visit link from your blackberry visit [http://dl.citysourced.com/m/sandiegoca/nt/sandiegoca\\_1\\_3\\_8.jad](http://dl.citysourced.com/m/sandiegoca/nt/sandiegoca_1_3_8.jad)

### GRAFFITI

Call the City of San Diego's Graffiti Control Hotline at **(619) 525-8522** and leave a voice message to report graffiti on private or public property. Your report will be verified and the party (property owner) responsible for removing the graffiti will be notified. Owners of private property can obtain free recycled paint and supplies to remove graffiti by calling the City Paint Bank Operations at **(619) 527-5419**. Or they can have the Urban Corps of San Diego paint it out by sending the Corps a signed letter of authorization. Call the Corps at **(800) 829-6884** for information on this. The faster graffiti is painted out the less likely it is to return. If it is not removed the City will use the enforcement remedies and abatement procedures in Secs. 54.0401 *et seq* of the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) to bring the property into compliance. Call **911** if the graffiti vandalism is in progress. Give the

dispatcher the location and a good description of the vandals and their vehicles. Do not confront them because they often carry weapons and have lookouts you may not see.

## **LITTER**

Call the City of San Diego's Environmental Services Department at **(858) 694-7000** regarding litter on private or public property. Call City Park and Recreation at **(619) 685-1350** regarding litter on property in a Landscape Maintenance Assessment district.

## **ANIMALS**

Call the County Department of Animal Control 24-hour emergency number, **(619) 236-2341**, to report incidents involving animals that threaten public health and safety. Call the City Environmental Services Department at **(858) 694-7000** for the removal of dead animals in public right-of-ways. The following numbers can be used for other animal control services:

- Spaying or neutering, lost and found, operator assistance, etc. **(619) 236-4250**
- Licensing and rabies vaccinations **(619) 236-4250**
- Adoptions **(619) 236-4250**
- Noise abatement **(619) 236-5500**

SDMC Sec. 59.5.0502(c)(1) makes it unlawful to keep an animal which by any frequent or long-continued noise annoys or discomforts a reasonable person of normal sensitivities in the vicinity. Sec. 59.5.0502(c)(2) states that animal noise that disturbs residents in two separate adjacent residences or three residents in three separate nearby residences will be prima facie evidence of a violation. If you and one or two neighbors are willing to sign complaints you should call the City Neighborhood Code Compliance Department at **(619) 236-5500**. If not, you could try mediation or a civil action as suggested below under neighborhood nuisances. But you will still need to prove the nuisance, which is best done with several witnesses.

## **UNSAFE STREET CONDITIONS**

Conditions that should be reported include: holes and cracks in surfaces and curbs; missing, damaged, or obscured signs; inoperative lights and signals; hazardous debris; needs for new safety measures; and trees that need trimming.

- **Holes and Cracks in Surfaces and Curbs.** Call City Street Division at **(619) 527-7500** to report potholes, cracks, and other problems with street surfaces, sidewalks, and curbs.
- **Missing, Damaged, or Obscured Signs.** Call **(619) 527-7500** to report these problems.
- **Inoperative Lights and Signals.** Call **(619) 527-7500** to report inoperative street lights and traffic signals.
- **Hazardous Debris.** Call the City Environmental Services Department at **(858) 694-7000** to report hazardous debris on streets. Call the California Highway Patrol at **(858) 637-3800** to report small objects on freeways that are unlikely to cause an accident or injure a motorist. Call **911** if the object could endanger motorists.
- **Needs for New Safety Measures.** Call City Transportation Engineering at **(619) 533-3126** to suggest new crosswalks, curb markings, traffic signals, signs, speed bumps, additional street lights, obstruction removal, etc.
- **Trees.** Call City Street Division at **(619) 527-7500** to report city-owned trees that need trimming.

## **CODE VIOLATIONS**

Call the City Neighborhood Code Compliance Department's *Citizen Complaint Intake Line* at **(619) 236-5500** regarding violations of the City's housing, building, sign, zoning, vehicle parking, weed abatement, and noise regulations. Some common violations that should be reported include vehicles parked in front yards, excessive weeds on private property, dilapidated or unsafe structures, unsecured vacant structures, uninhabitable rental housing, building or remodeling without permits, illegally posted signs, operating a business from a home, other illegal uses of residential property, and garages converted to living spaces.

## NEIGHBORHOOD NUISANCES

Nuisances can include an unsightly property, excessive noise, gang activity, prostitution, drug activity, trespassing, CC&R violations, etc. The SDPD will assist neighbors wishing to take civil action against problem property owners to abate these and other nuisances. The basis for the civil action is a California law that makes property owners responsible for using their property in an ordinary and reasonable manner that is conducive to the peace and harmony of the neighborhood and does not interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property by others. Property owners violate the law by allowing a nuisance to exist on their property whether they themselves live there or not. Once they become aware of the nuisance they become responsible for abating it.

The following steps should be taken to keep disputes with neighbors from becoming violent.

- Get to know your neighbor. Introduce yourself and talk about general issues of interest. A few weeks later raise your complaint.
- Keep a log of the nuisance. Write down the date, time, duration, and nature and effects of the nuisance.
- Discuss the nuisance with your neighbor and propose a solution to the problem. Explain your situation in a calm, polite way and outline the reasons for your concerns.
- Talk to your other neighbors. If the nuisance is affecting them a joint appeal for a solution should be made.
- Try mediation. It's less formal and may be less expensive than going to court. You can call the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) at **(619) 238-2400** or go to its website at **www.ncrconline.com** to open a case. A case coordinator will call you within 24 hours to gather information about your case. The NCRC mediates disputes free of charge through funding by the County of San Diego.

If you need assistance in dealing with a nuisance you can send an e-mail describing the problem to Fred Zuckerman at **FZuckerman@pd.sandiego.gov**. He will work with you and guide you through a process to abate the nuisance. The process involves the following steps: collection of evidence, documentation of the nuisance effects, notification and negotiation with the property owner, demand that the nuisance be stopped, etc. If the property owner fails to abate the nuisance you and other neighbors affected by the nuisance can file a suit in small claims court where you describe the nuisance and your efforts to resolve it. In court, the judge has the power to order the property owner to abate the nuisance and/or pay monetary damages. There is no charge for the assistance. Court costs will usually be around \$100.

## ABANDONED SHOPPING CARTS

Members of neighborhood and business watch groups, business improvement districts, and other community groups who are concerned about this problem should do the following when they see an abandoned cart:

- If the cart has a phone number on it for retrieval purposes, call that number and report the location of the cart. The number may be that of the store or that of the California Shopping Cart Retrieval Corporation (CSCRC), which has contracts with some stores to retrieve and return their carts. Its number is **(800) 252-4613**.
- If the cart has a store name on it but no phone number, look up the number of the nearest store and call it to report the location of the cart or call the City Environmental Services Code Enforcement Section at **(858) 694-7000** to report its location. It will investigate the complaint and deal with the cart in the appropriate manner.
- If the cart has neither a store name or phone number, which is rare, call the City Environmental Services Code Enforcement Section to report its location.

## CHILD ABUSE

Call the County Social Services Department's Child Protective Services Child Abuse Hotline at **(858) 560-2191** or **(800) 344-6000** to report situations in which you suspect that a child has been abused or appears to be at risk of being abused. Your report will be investigated and steps will be taken to protect the child and preserve the family unit. The SDPD will be informed if abuse is involved. If you know that abuse has occurred, you should call SDPD directly at **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**. If the abuse is in progress you should call **911**. The police will investigate, take steps to protect the victim, prosecute the abuser, and inform the County Social Service Department.

The following are some signs of child abuse:

- Unusual or suspicious injuries
- Sexual language or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age
- Specific comments or complaints about abuse
- Lack of basic needs for food, clothing, and medical care
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of supervision for long periods of time

## ELDER AND DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE

Call San Diego County Aging & Independence Services at **(800) 510-2020** to report suspected instances of neglect and psychological, physical, financial, or sexual abuse of elders and dependent adults. This agency carries out investigations and provides assistance and case management where appropriate. The SDPD will be informed if abuse is involved. If you know that abuse has occurred, you should call SDPD directly at **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**. If the abuse is in progress, you should call **911**. The police will investigate, take steps to protect the victim, prosecute the perpetrator, and inform the appropriate County office.

The following are some signs of various types of elder and dependent adult abuse:

- **Neglect.** Inadequate clothing, missed medical appointments, dirty and unkempt appearance, malnutrition, dehydration, or lack of necessary medications, eyeglasses, hearing aid, etc.
- **Psychological abuse.** Unreasonable or excessive fears, withdrawal, loss of appetite, agitation, unexplained bouts of crying, or confusion.
- **Physical abuse.** Bites, burns, and unexplained broken bones, welts, or bruises.
- **Financial abuse.** Transfers of large amounts of money, inability to pay bills or buy basic necessities, lack of knowledge of own finances, vanishing personal property, bounced checks and inability to balance checking account, or sudden, unexplained changes in bank account activity.
- **Sexual abuse.** Unexplained venereal diseases or genital infections, bruising or bleeding in the genital area, unexplained pain or itching in the genital area, or torn, stained, or bloody underwear.

For current information on preventing elder abuse in San Diego County go to the Aging & Independence Services website at **[www.ais-sd.org](http://www.ais-sd.org)**, click on View All Services, select AIS Publications under Staying Informed - AIS, and then select the Safe Seniors newsletter. Its articles include features about related programs and services, items of general interest regarding elder abuse prevention, and a listing of current legislation related to elder abuse. The newsletter is a combined effort of Aging & Independence Services and the District Attorney's office.

At the federal level the National Center on Elder Abuse serves as a resource center dedicated to the prevention of elder abuse. On its website at **[www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov)** you will find information on:

- How to find help if you are worried about a senior in your community
- Definitions, signs, and risks of elder abuse
- Resources for caregivers

## LOST PERSON WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

After calling **911** to report a lost or found person, call the Alzheimer's Association's *MedicAlert + Safe Return Program* 24-hour Hotline at **(800) 625-3780**. Your call will activate a community response team that will: (1) notify other law enforcement agencies, hospitals, transportation modes, the media, and other organizations, as appropriate; (2) provide support to the family; (3) provide new information to law enforcement agencies as available; and (4) notify all agencies when the person is found. To enroll a person in MedicAlert and obtain identification for the person to wear you can call **(800) 432-5378** or visit its website at **[www.medicalert.org](http://www.medicalert.org)**.

The person should also be enrolled in the Take Me Home (TMH) Registry maintained by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. There is no cost for enrollment. Information about this Registry can be found on its website

at [www.sdsheriff.net/co\\_tmh.html](http://www.sdsheriff.net/co_tmh.html). To enroll a person you would do the following: (1) call the San Diego/Imperial Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association at **(858) 492-4400** to obtain a registration form, (2) fill out the form, and (3) return the completed form with a photo, if one is available, to the Chapter. The Chapter will then upload the information in the TMH Registry where it will be available to all law enforcement agencies in the County. In reporting a lost person, be sure to tell the dispatcher that the person is enrolled in the TMH Registry.